
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SSB 5072

Brief Description: Authorizing the department of agriculture to accept and expend gifts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Hatfield, Shin and Haugen; by request of Department of Agriculture).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to accept, expend, and retain gifts, grants, bequests, or other contributions.
- Authorizes surplus campaign funds to be donated to the WSDA for distribution to food banks.

Hearing Date: 3/8/11

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Washington State Department of Agriculture

The WSDA oversees, manages, regulates, and supports programs that relate to food safety and the agriculture industry. The scope of the WSDA includes animal services, commodity inspections, consumer services, pesticide management, plant services, food assistance programs, and the marketing of Washington agricultural products.

The WSDA is authorized to collect fees and assessments. The agency is not specifically authorized to accept gifts, bequests, or other voluntary contributions.

Surplus Campaign Funds

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Surplus campaign funds accumulated during a campaign for public office may only be used lawfully in certain ways. These funds can be returned to the contributors to the campaign or, in some instances, be retained by the candidate. Surplus funds may also be donated or transferred for end users other than the candidate or the contributor. These include transferring the money to a political party, to a charity, or to the State Treasurer for support of the state library, archives, Washington State Legacy Project, the Legislative International Trade Account, or the state's General Fund [RCW 42.17A.430].

Summary of Bill:

The WSDA is authorized to accept, expend, and retain gifts, grants, bequests, or other contributions. Accepted contributions may be from public or private sources and must be used to carry out the purposes and programs of the WSDA.

The only specific identified source of gifted resources is that of surplus campaign funds from a candidate for public office. Although the general authority to accept gifts affects all programs of the WSDA, only the WSDA Food Assistance Program is able to receive surplus campaign funds. These funds, if donated, must be used for distribution to food banks.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.